GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4940
ANSWERED ON:10.05.2007
ELORA CAVES
Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Mane Smt. Nivedita

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are no lighting arrangements in the Elora Caves as reported in the `Hindustan` dated January 3, 2007;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereon; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to protect the national monuments of Elora Caves?

Answer

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI)

(a)&(b) There is no lighting at the Ellora Caves. Lighting was initially provided at Cave No. 34 by the CPWD on an experimental basis. However, the Panel of Experts (POE) appointed for Ajanta and Ellora Caves did not approve the conventional lighting.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) proposes to provide fiber optic lighting in the painted caves. The POE have suggested that any lighting proposed to be provided at the Caves must be properly designed and details submitted to them at the next meeting of the POE.

(d) The Ellora Caves are being conserved under the JBIC (External Aided Programme). Phase II of the JBIC Project is now on.

Apart from undertaking regular conservation, preservation and maintenance, the Archaeological Survey of India has assigned Geological Survey of India (GSI) to conduct geo-technical studies of the Caves and recommend methods for conservation of the Caves and prevent them from natural disintegration. The GSI would also recommend methods for arresting seepage of water into the Caves.

As already suggested by the Panel of Experts, Archaeological Survey of India has taken up a progrmame for providing surface water drainage which is expected to minimize seepage into the Caves. It is proposed that the design of the surface drainage would be prepared by the Central Water Power Research Station (CWPRS), Pune.